EXCISE E B1A9 B1A5

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260461 271429Z /47

R 270901Z APR 81
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7532
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIJING
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
CIA WASHDC
WHITEHOUSE WASHDC
DIA WASHINGTON DC//
SECDEF WASHDC
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
COMIPAC HONOLULU HI
FICPAC PEARL HARBOR HI
RUMUAAA/13AF CLARK AB RP
CDRFSTC CHARLOTTESVILLE VA
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DIA FOR DC-4B
CIA FOR NFAC
CSA FOR DAMI-ISH
PARIS FOR BIGELOW
CINCPAC FOR POLAD AND J233
FSTC FOR DRXST-FMO AND IS1
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY T. Heaver DATE 8/3/82
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

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CDRAARADCON FIR DRDAR-SE1C
EO 12065: GDS:04/27/87 (ABRAMOWITZ, MORTON I.) OR-M
TAGS: SHUM, PORG, MMOL, SREF, LA, VM, UR
SUBJ: HMONG REFUGEES PROVIDE ALLEGED SAMPLES OF "POISON GAS" RESIDUE

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)

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2. SUMMARY: [redacted] HAS OBTAINED TWO SAMPLES OF WHAT IS ALLEGED TO BE RESIDUE FROM CHEMICAL AIR ATTACKS LAUNCHED AGAINST HMONG VILLAGERS IN LAOS. BOTH ARE BEING POUCHED. THE FIRST SAMPLE COMES FROM AN OCTOBER 25, 1980 ATTACK; THE SECOND FROM AN APRIL 1, 1981 ATTACK. BOTH ATTACKS REPORTEDLY WERE CONDUCTED BY AIRCRAFT. BOTH ATTACKS ALIEGEDLY PRODUCED SERIOUS ILLNESS AMONG SOME OF THE TARGETED VILLAGERS, BUT IN NEITHER INCIDENT WERE THERE ANY HUMAN FATALITIES. THE DESCRIPTION OF SYMPTOMS GENERALLY FOLLOWS

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EARLIER ACCOUNTS. AS DESCRIBED, THE COLLECTED SAMPLES (WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN OPENED SINCE RECEIPT) SEEM SIMILAR TO THE YELLOW POWDER SAMPLES COLLECTED IN JUNE AND OCTOBER OF 1979. END SUMMARY.

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3. [redacted] PROVIDED US WITH TWO SMALL PACKETS WHICH HIS SOURCES ALLEGED CONTAIN RESIDUE FROM TWO SEPARATE CHEMICAL AIR ATTACKS AGAINST HMONG VILLAGERS IN LAOS. TWO HMONG WHO RECENTLY EMERGED FROM LAOS GAVE THE SAMPLES TO [redacted] APRIL 16 AND 21 RESPECTIVELY. [redacted] WITNESSED THE APRIL 16 TURNOVER. THE TWO SAMPLES ARE BEING SENT APRIL 30, AS WE RECEIVED THEM, ADDRESSED TO EA/VLK VIA STATE DEPARTMENT COURIER.

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4. SOURCES FOR EACH SAMPLE PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION REGARDING CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE ATTACK:

5. SAMPLE "A": SOURCE, [redacted] STATED THAT HE WITNESSED THE ATTACK WHICH TOOK PLACE OCTOBER 25, 1980 IN THE PHU BIA AREA AT NEU UNG (VICTF6959). SOURCE CLAIMED THAT THE CHEMICAL WAS RELEASED AT APPROXIMATELY 4,000 FEET BY A MIG 17 OVER THE VILLAGE. SOURCE IDENTIFIED THE SUBSTANCE AS A YELLOW/ORANGE POWDER. DOMESTIC FOWL DIED QUICKLY AFTER THE ATTACK. WITHIN A FEW HOURS, 30 OF THE 120 PEOPLE IN THE VILLAGE BECAME ILL, THOUGH NONE DIED FROM THE EPISODE.

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SYMPTOMS INCLUDED NAUSEA, VOMITING, LATER WITH
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SOME HEMATEMESIS, RHINORRHEA, SNEEZING, COUGHING AND DIARRHEA. AFTER ABOUT ONE WEEK, SOME VILLAGERS DEVELOPED SERIOUS FILLED BLISTERS. LEAVES ON TREES UNDER THE ATTACK TURNED BROWN WITHIN TWO WEEKS WHILE LEAVES ON SHRUBS AND ESPECIALLY TAPIOCA DIED SOONER.

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6. SAMPLE "B": SOURCE, [redacted] STATED THAT HE WITNESSED THE ATTACK WHICH TOOK PLACE APRIL 1, 1981 ON THE NORTH SIDE OF MOUNTAIN (SF8267) WEST OF BAN DON. (VILLAGES ON THE EAST AND SOUTH OF THE MOUNTAIN WERE ALSO AFFECTED BUT IT IS UNCLEAR IF SEPARATE ATTACKS WERE INVOLVED.) THE ATTACK TOOK PLACE AT APPROXIMATELY 0900 HOURS ON A CLOUDY DAY WITH THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN IN CLOUDS. AN AIRCRAFT WHICH SOUNDED LIKE A JET FIGHTER APPROACHED THE VILLAGE FROM THE EAST SOUTH-EAST MAKING A SINGLE PASS. CHEMICAL RESIDUE WAS NOTED ON THE LEAVES AND GROUND ABOUT 1100

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HOURS. NEITHER ANIMALS NOR ANY OF THE APPROXIMATELY 500 PEOPLE IN THE VILLAGE DIED. NINE OF THE VILLAGERS WERE AFFECTED WITH NAUSEA, VOMITING AND DIARRHEA TWO HOURS AFTER EATING A WEDDING FEAST PIG AT 1400. THE PIG HAD BEEN GARNISHED WITH FRESHLY-PICKED ONIONS CONTAMINATED BY THE CHEMICAL. OTHER VILLAGERS EXPOSED DURING THE ATTACK IN A RICE PADDY BEGAN TO FEEL "DRUNK" AT ABOUT 1300 HOURS.

7. OTHER SYMPTOMS NOTED AMONG VILLAGERS INCLUDED A "COOL" FEELING ON THE SKIN OF THE PEOPLE IN THE RICE PADDY. WITHIN 24 HOURS ALL THOSE AFFECTED EXPERIENCED A DRUNKEN SENSATION, HEADACHE, THICK SPUTA, VERTIGO, INCREASED HEART RATE, RHINORRHEA, DRY COUGH, TEARING, CONJUNCTIVITIS AND BLURRED VISION IN ALL LASTING ABOUT FIVE DAYS. VICTIMS TREATED THEMSELVES WITH SMALL AMOUNTS OF OPIUM. AFTER FIVE DAYS SEVERAL VILLAGERS, INCLUDING SOURCE, DEVELOPED "MOSQUITO BITE-LIKE" SPOTS ALL OVER THE BODY. IN ADDITION TO ABOVE SYMPTOMS SOURCE NOTED THAT HE FELT SLEEPY FOR ABOUT FIVE DAYS BUT THAT HE SLEPT WITHOUT UNUSUAL DREAMING.

8. THE SAMPLE ("B") WAS SCRAPED FROM A BANANA LEAF ONTO A PAPER AND THENCE TO A PREVIOUSLY WASHED OUT CONTAINER ON THE DAY FOLLOWING THE ATTACK.

9. COMMENT: WE NOTE THAT ATTACKS IN THE BAN

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DON AREA HAVE BEEN REPORTED SEVERAL TIMES IN
THE PAST TWO YEARS DESPITE THE REPORTED
PRESENCE IN THAT GENERAL AREA OF AO AND
VIETNAMESE FORCES WHO SERVE AS GUARDS FOR
LARGE NUMBERS OF HMONG WHO HAVE BEEN FOR
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THE MOST PART FORCIBLY RESETTLED THERE. END
COMMENT. ABRAMOWITZ
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